



Press Release

08 June 2021

Immediate Release

---

### **SANEDI promotes gender mainstreaming through ESCo Market Development**

A recent [study by IRENA](#) found that women make up just 22% of the global energy sector; a trend reflected in South Africa's industry. In the just energy transition for South Africa, there needs to be a focus on changing this trend. This just transition is defined as a shift from our current energy system to one that is better in terms of sustainability, environmental impact, climate change, human health, economics, employment and social equity.

"As the definition so clearly outlines, the development of women in the energy industry is paramount in this transition," states Wendy Jali, Project Officer in the Energy Efficiency programme at the South African National Energy Development Institute, (SANEDI). Having joined SANEDI in 2014 with a qualification in geography and environmental management, she has progressed and now leads an important SANEDI project, supported by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) and other key local and international stakeholders.

"Since 2016, I have been involved with developing a national database of Energy Service Companies (ESCO's), commonly referred to as the ESCo register," says Jali. "The register was initially developed to assist municipalities participating in government funded energy efficiency projects, to source reputable energy efficiency service providers who they could trust but, since then, it has evolved into a wider tool within the ESCo market development activities in the country." While listing your company and expert services on the register is voluntary, it is increasingly becoming a prerequisite in order to secure work in the energy efficiency sector in South Africa.

ESCO registers are an internationally recognised tool in many countries and in South Africa, it was originally established under the guidance of the South African Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, (DMRE) in collaboration with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), who are the German Development Agency, in South Africa. It is utilised by both public and private sector organisations to identify and plan the

implementation of energy efficiency projects, including energy efficiency demand-side management (EEDSM) and small-scale renewable energy embedded generation projects. The register is regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring that it remains relevant while also providing ESCOs with the opportunity to improve their service offering and progress through the 3-tier ranking classification as they add new technologies and more projects to their portfolios.

At this stage, there are 34 tier 1 ESCOs on the register, (these are fully qualified companies with experience in multiple technologies and larger energy efficiency and renewable energy projects), 45 tier 2 ESCOs (medium sized) and 13 tier 3 or start-up ESCOs on the national register.

“In my personal work experience, I have seen first-hand how male-dominated the energy sector can be locally and internationally. This is a narrative that I – and SANEDI – hope to change. In the ESCo register we are looking to focus on women-owned companies, to assist them with capacity building. It’s important to facilitate the development of the energy industry, by ensuring that it is easy to make contact with SMMEs which are predominantly youth and women-owned,” says Jali.

“Throughout my career at SANEDI, I have received amazing opportunities to grow my skills, , and learn more about the energy industry, which even included international training at the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris, France and attending Energy Efficiency training in India,” says Jali. She hopes to be able to integrate being a geographer with her energy sector experience, to become an advocate for sustainable human settlement and resource efficiency, especially in rural areas. Jali explains, “Indigenous knowledge and practices are conversations that need to be brought forward in the ongoing quest to achieve energy efficiency.”

“The support I’ve felt from my managers and colleagues who have helped me navigate this sector, has been invaluable and has equipped me to lead this important ESCo register project. This has inspired me to drive this project in a manner that creates similar opportunities for other women in the energy sector and to play my part in achieving a just energy transition,” concludes Jali.

Ends 666 words

### **Follow SANEDI on social media**

Facebook: @sanedi.org

Twitter: @sanedi\_org

LinkedIn: @sanedi.org

### **About SANEDI**

The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI), established by the Government, directs, monitors and conducts applied energy research to develop innovative, integrated solutions to catalyse growth and prosperity in the green economy. It drives scientific evidence-driven ventures that contribute to youth empowerment, gender equity, environmental sustainability and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, within the National Development Plan (NDP), through consultative, sustainable energy projects. For more information, go to [www.sanedi.org.za](http://www.sanedi.org.za).